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CENTER FOR AFTERSCHOOL EDUCATION
FOUNDATIONS, INC.

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CLINICS CLINIC
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INTRODUCTION:

HOMework ZONE CLINICS

The **Homework Zone** creates a relaxed, but focused work environment, where students learn to take themselves seriously as students. In creating that environment, it's essential to offer options for skill-building and support. Running Clinics as part of the **Passing Zone**¹ provides students with the opportunity to choose a structured, skill-focused activity.

Clinics: What and Why

Clinics are 20 to 30 minute mini-lessons for practicing cross-subject skills including:

- speaking, presenting opinions, summarizing
- reading comprehension and strategies
- writing strategies
- studying, note-taking

Like a sports clinic, where athletes concentrate on a particular skill detail for a short, but intense time, Zone Clinics provide quick practice in skills that often fall through the cracks of the regular school day. Offering Clinics in the **Homework Zone** gives students the opportunity to practice with peers in a structured activity.

This *Clinics Guide* provides 25 core Clinics with handouts. Most are adapted to three levels of difficulty (indicated by **black diamonds** on the edge of the page) to allow Learning Coaches to better fit Clinics to participating students. The content is the same across the variations, but the more difficult level (**three diamonds**) has longer reading passages, with more advanced vocabulary and sentence structures. **One diamond** Clinics use shorter sentences and simplified vocabulary. Clinics with **unshaded diamonds** are suitable for any level.

Each Clinic follows the same lesson pattern:

- **Zone In**, a warm up or introduction activity focused on communication skills. The three different types of Zone Ins are repeated, allowing students to practice regularly and quickly, building fluency and confidence.
- **Topic**, skill area addressed and materials needed
- **Introduction**, with discussion to connect with students' experience or prior knowledge
- **Activity**, such as a reading followed by discussion
- **Wrap up**, discuss answers and debrief for students' opinions and suggestions for future clinics

¹ The **Passing Zone** is the area within the **Homework Zone** where students study for class tests, review class notes and material, practice for SATs and standardized tests, etc.

Using Clinics

Clinics are best offered as an option by posting or announcing the Clinic topic and time, and having students sign up. To motivate students to attend, stress the topic, not just the skill. Talk about taking this opportunity to build and practice skills with friends in a non-school setting—no tests, no pressure. Encourage students to work in groups, talk through questions, and exchange ideas to reinforce the point.

Clinics do not need to be offered in the order presented in this guide. Choose based on student interests, not just their needs. Feel free to substitute higher interest readings when available.

Student involvement and leadership

When possible, get students to lead Clinics themselves. In mixed grade groupings, enlist the help of an older student as Clinic leader. Review the Clinics with student leaders beforehand, and have them select the ones they'd like to lead. Go over the material in advance, help with preparation, be supportive, and encourage more! See if students can get service learning or other credit for regularly preparing for and leading Clinics.

Students may also be able to suggest Clinic topics, or come up with their own material. **Zone In** activities are particularly easy to tailor to student interests, and can be a good first piece for them to lead on their own.

Procedures Step-by-Step

1. Plan. At the end of each week, select Clinics for the following week. If possible, check in with class teachers periodically to see what they might recommend as skill areas to practice.
2. Announce and post. Let students know what's coming up. Talk it up, and see if students have requests.
3. Review the Clinic ahead of time; prepare handouts. Know how to do the **Zone In**, and familiarize yourself with the topic and lesson.
4. Each day, post (and promote!) the Clinic topic and time; make the sign-in log (template on CD) prominently available.
5. Announce the start of the Clinic, and begin five minutes later. Speed things up by putting a handout on each chair in advance, or have a stack for students to take as they go to their seats.
6. Move directly into the **Zone In** and try to keep things moving. Avoid getting bogged down. Encourage participation by asking open ended questions, and helping students ask and respond directly to each other.

7. Quick check. Monitor whether students find Clinics helpful, and which are best for whom. Should anyone be encouraged to seek more in-depth help? Should Clinics be repeated? Modified? Ask students to suggest topics, modifications, or skill areas.

Running Clinics

Clinic plans all show the **Zone In, Topic, Introduction, Activity, and Wrap Up**. The following sections detail how to run each segment.

Zone In

Three types of five minute Zone In activities are used across the Clinics, each targeting communication and language arts skills: (1) One Minute Review; (2) Free Write; and (3) Question of the Week.

(1) One Minute Review

In the **One Minute Review Zone In**, students prepare and present a one minute review of a CD, book, TV show, or something else they choose. This helps them practice identifying key information and main points quickly, form an opinion, explain their reasoning, summarize, and present information clearly and persuasively to a group.

1. Tell students they can be a critic and recommend a movie, CD, artist, book, concert, performance, television show, song, etc.
2. Explain that Critics will need to present the facts, their opinions, and a recommendation in one minute.

Facts: Name, title, what it is (CD, TV show, book, movie), date, main points (summary).

Opinions: What do you think of it? Why? What are your reasons?

Recommendation: What do you suggest people do (buy, watch, see, avoid, etc.)? Who would like this? Who would not?

GOOD CLINICS IN ACTION

The Learning Coach engages students with high-energy Zone In activities.

The topic is presented clearly, and connected with student interests, needs, or experience.

Students feel free to work independently or in small groups. The Coach encourages peer grouping to support students who are struggling.

Students get into discussions, asking and answering each others' and the Coaches' questions.

The Coach circulates to check understanding while students work.

Coaches direct students to sources of further help, when needed.

3. Allow students thirty seconds to think about what they could review.
4. Ask for a volunteer to be the Critic.
5. Give the Critic two minutes to think about the recommendation and consult with others, if desired.
6. Allow one minute for the presentation. Remind the Critic to give the facts, express his or her opinion, and make a recommendation.
7. If there's time and it seems appropriate, ask students to respond with a show of hands to questions such as, "Is anyone else familiar with what the Critic reviewed? Do you agree with the recommendation—yes or no? Do you plan to follow the recommendation?"

(2) Free Write

The **Free Write Zone In** asks students to brainstorm a list of words in response to a keyword prompt (typically related to the upcoming activity). This technique is a valuable step in developing writing skills: generating ideas, making connections, and getting words and thoughts in writing quickly. It also expands vocabulary and builds writing fluidity and confidence.

1. Tell students that the **Free Write** is a one-minute race to see if the group can reach a target number of words related to a keyword prompt. Be clear that words are counted as a group, and no one will look at spelling.
2. The target number is the number of students in the group times 10. If there are 12 students, the target is 120 words. If there are 7 students, the target is 70 words. Some students will write many words, others only a few, so keep the goal on the number the whole group reaches with all the lists pooled. Adjust goals to keep up the challenge.
3. Give the word from the Clinic plan and start timing one minute. Note: As everyone learns to do **Free Writes**, students or Coaches can provide the keyword starter.
4. At the end of one minute, call "time," and ask each student to count his or her words.
5. Ask a student to total it and see if the goal was reached.
6. If there's time, ask volunteers to read some words from their lists, and see whether they're shared by many, or are unusual.

(3) Question of the Week

The **Question of the Week Zone In** grooms students to respond to and present a viewpoint on a thought-provoking question. This promotes techniques for group discussion, critical thinking, agreeing and disagreeing with others, summarizing, explaining rationales, and making oral presentations.

1. Tell students they'll have one minute to convincingly present a position on a YES/NO question such as, "Should cell phones be allowed in school?" "Should students be allowed to eat in class?" "Should there be a military draft?" They'll discuss the question in groups, but one person will be the group's speaker.
2. Give the question in the Clinic. As everyone gets comfortable with the activity, students and Coaches may come up with good questions to use.
3. Divide students into two groups, with one group taking the YES position and the other group taking the NO position. Students can voluntarily separate in to YES and NO groups, or you can assign them to different positions if the groups are uneven.
4. Allow two minutes to prepare responses and choose a presenter.
5. Give each speaker one minute to present.
6. After both sides present, ask students to vote YES or NO on the question by a show of hands.

Topic

The **Topic** clearly states the specific skills that students practice in the clinics. Special materials are also listed in this section. Use this section to choose a Clinic that meets the current needs of your students.

Introduction

The **Introduction** focuses students on the Clinic topic. Most **Zone Ins** start the process (and to the extent possible, **Zone Ins** should set the stage), then move to explaining the topic and connecting it to students' experience and prior knowledge. Use the opportunity to interest students in the topic, and also to be clear about the skill building objectives.

Activity

The **Activity** is laid out in the Clinic plan, along with any needed handouts. Encourage students to work together, and maintain a relaxed, but focused atmosphere. Circulate and monitor, be available to answer questions, and help students solve problems on their own or in groups. If students finish early, provide additional activities, or pair the faster ones with those having a harder time. (See the *Homework Zone Operations Guide* for helping strategies and techniques.)

Wrap Up

Be sure to include time at the end to discuss answers and acknowledge work. It's important that students at the secondary level see the purpose of their work, so praise them for taking the time, and name the skills they're building in each Clinic.

If you have the time, check in on how the Clinic worked for the students. Was it helpful? Do they have suggestions for how to make it more helpful or interesting? Suggestions for topics or skills to practice? But remember—don't ask for suggestions unless you plan to use them! Whenever feasible, incorporate student ideas and leadership.

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